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ABSTRACT

Native American tribes have a critical need for effective leadership, which can be found in the brightest of their youth. However, the focus of federal and state Native programs has been to provide remedial education. Historically, Native students at federal boarding schools did not perform at high levels because of low teacher expectations, little opportunity, and peer pressure. Conformity to mainstream norms is still a problem for Native students who struggle with being Native and gifted, as well as with poverty, isolation, and the usual identity problems of adolescence. Within the school system, the major barrier to Native participation in gifted programs is assessment procedures that are biased racially, ethnically, and culturally. The extensive reliance on biased standardized tests effectively precludes the identification of gifted students who have experiential deprivations or limited English language development. A multicultural or culture-specific approach to identification would use multiple criteria that assess acquired skills, tribal and cultural understanding, human and personal qualities, and aesthetic abilities. Nineteen gifted and talented projects and programs for Native students are described. The scarcity of such programs makes program effectiveness essential. The Native community must be involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the program. More Native teachers are needed to teach this student population, to conduct training programs for educators and parents, and to encourage parent involvement in gifted programs. This paper contains over 100 references. (SV)

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Gifted and Talented American Indian and Alaska Native Students

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Introduction

From the earliest memory of tribal people, there is evidence that they relied for survival or prosperity upon those individuals that were visionary and exemplary in the way they conducted their lives. Tribes have referred and deferred to those individuals with high outstanding abilities and accorded them respect because of these qualities. Those respected persons exhibited behaviors that denoted high ability and performance as leaders, peacemakers, Holy men, warriors, orators, planners, logisticians, singers, dancers, and artisans. These outstanding persons rose to prominence and performed needed tasks in response to the needs of the tribe, community and village.

How did the tribes identify these high ability people? Vine Deloria speculates that "... The basic Indian endures and... the people still follow a man simply because he produces." (*Custer Died For Your Sins*, p. 205) These producers had characteristics that in different ways set them apart from others. For some it may have been the ability to listen and interpret what was said. For others it may have been the ability to plan, to lead, or the ability to heal.

These persons and those with the *potential* to excel in a need area were identified early in their lives, taught and nurtured by parents, mentors and the tribe as a whole. They were taught in an environment in which they learned by example, learned at their own pace, learned by discovery and were taught by grandparents and uncles or aunts who had a symbiotic relationship in which they were of equal stature. Learning occurred with each participant respecting the other and knowledge and skills passed from one to the other in a non-threatening and open environment. Challenges were presented, accomplishments recognized and higher level or in-depth learning progressed until the teacher/mentor passed on. The "student' then became the mentor/teacher to another generation. It was in this way tribes perpetuated themselves and passed on the wisdom and strength of their culture. Those of high ability passed their strength of character, courage, commitment, knowledge, skills, and sense of self to those promising youth who exhibited outstanding behaviors or the potential for outstanding behaviors. This was education for many tribal youth and it served these individuals and their tribes well.

More recently, the education of the Native in the United States has, through treaties, been directly associated with the U.S. Government which assumed the major responsibility for providing education services and programs. Government reports and legal documents describe the federal governments' educational efforts and responsibilities. It presents an ever-changing perspective of the needs, goals and activities utilized to educate America's Native population. Felix Cohen, an expert on Indian law, cited Congressional Act of March 3, 1819, as the organic basis for most of the education work of the Indian Service. The Act of 1819 authorized the President,

> ... in every case he deems suitable and with consent of the tribe, ... to employ capable persons of good moral character to instruct (Indian) in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation; and for teaching their children in reading, writing and arithmetic... (Szaz, *Education and American Indian, 1974*)

The early Federal intent of educating Natives was to make them a counterpart of America's White farming society, to change them from hunters to agriculturalists and to have the Native assimilate into American society. In the words of Captain Richard Henry Pratt, Founder of Carlisle Indian School, the first Indian boarding school," ... [we will] submerge him under the waters of our civilization and hold him there until all his Indianness has left him" (Pratt,_____ p.__) Native people resisted this forced assimilation policy and systems of education by refusing to send their children to federal boarding schools. The Secretary of the Interior, who at the time had responsibility for the Federal government to educate Natives, instituted a "compulsory" attendance policy by authorizing the "withholding of rations, clothing, and other annuities from Indian parents or guardians who refused or neglected to send their children to school" (Act of March 3, 1893, 27 Stat. 612, 635). Fortunately, other Federal legislation was passed, providing for voluntary parental con-

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sent before removing the Native child from home to a federal boarding school.

Studies conducted in the 20th Century: the Meriam Report of 1928 and the *Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge*, known as the Kennedy Report of 1968, recommended a change in thinking regarding Native education. The Meriam report, entitled, *The Problem of Indian Administration*, recommended, "that the family and social structure of Indian people must be given the choice to decide the direction of their destiny." (Meriam, Louis, *et al*, 1928) The Meriam Report elaborated further, "...Indian education must be adapted to individual abilities, interests, and needs of Indian people..." The Meriam Report noted that the standard course of study involving routine classroom methods and traditional types of schools, even if they were supplied, would not solve the (Indian) problem. Unfortunately for Native people, the Meriam report's recommendations were virtually ignored by the U.S. government and a segregated approach to educating Natives remained unchanged for another 40 years.

The Kennedy Report of 1968 also pointed out the need for educational services and programs that reflected Native culture and to be administered and taught by American Indian and Alaskan Natives. The Kennedy Report indicated that there should be increased participation of Native people in their own education and that a comprehensive statute needed to be established that would replace the fragmented and inadequate Native legislation then in existence. A landmark bill, the Indian Education Act of 1972, was that statute; it addressed many Native education needs, such as Native participation and control of education affecting them and provided supplemental funds to public schools that Native children attend to meet the "...special educational or culturally-related academic (Education Amendment of 1978) needs of American Indian and Alaska Native children and adults." The Kennedy Report found that the educational conditions of the American Indian and Alaska native peoples in the United States were found to be at the extreme of the educational and social-economic strata. High drop-outs (62-90 percent) in some schools Native students attend; negative self-concepts, high suicide rates, low achievement scores, and high substance abuse were a few problem areas identified. Stated perceptions of Native students by those charged to educate them were that "...they were dumb and inferior to white students." (*Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge*, p. 53)

Background

What then have these conditions wrought? Educationally the federal and state's educational intent has been to provide remedial education to the American Indian and Alaska native learner to "bring him up to level" with his non-Native cohort. Provisions in numerous federal laws; i.e. Johnson O'Malley (JOM), Impact Aid, the Indian Education Act (IEA) of 1972 allow for supplemental programs of tutoring and counseling to enable Native students to "catch up."

What has happened to those tribal members with high ability? What has happened to those tribal individuals with outstanding leadership ability? What has happened to those individuals who could "produce?" Those individuals, now recognized in the education community as Gifted and Talented Native students, have been forgotten, ignored and in some sense, are invisible. They have succumbed or have been absorbed in what Alexis de Toqueville, in his *Democracy In America* (1833) describes as the "Middling Standard." He states,

> It is not the fortunes of men which are equal in America; even when acquirements partake in some degree of the same uniformity. I do not believe that there is a country in the world where in proportion to the population, there are so few ignorant and at the same time so few learned individuals. (Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy In America*, Heffover, 1924, p. 165)

The American societal notion of equality was the basis for this observation. Add to this, for many tribes, a value of consensus or "for the good of all" where an individuals' contributions were not for personal gain or recognition but for the good of the tribe. Native students who attended federal boarding schools or state controlled public schools were influenced not to perform at high levels because (1) it was not expected (stereo typical perceptions) (2) they had little opportunity (3) their peer group did not accept this behavior.

The outstanding behaviors that commanded respect from tribal people in earlier times when exhibited, were now discredited traits that ostracized the individual. The critical thinker was criticized by this peers for his unusual thoughts; the creative problem solver was singled out as a misfit. After a few attempts to overcome these derisive attitudes, the bright, motivated individuals either succeeds on his/her own or relents and conforms to peer pressure. Conformity was and has been the bell weather for American society and its education institutions. To be different in the public schools (Native and gifted) was and is

difficult. To conform and be like the rest was and is easy. Therefore, those Native individuals with the potential for greatness were faced with numerous barriers in developing their potential (1) being different (Native) (2) being bright (gifted) (3) being isolated (non-conforming) and struggling with self-identify, adolescence and for most, poverty.

With American societal and peer pressure being so great on all students "to be like everyone else," Native students tried to be like their peers; they soon found out that they (1) were not like everyone else (2) American society would not *allow* them to be like everyone else and (3) their tribal societies did not *want* them to be like everyone else. This resulted in the Native student having to make an either-or choice; either reject who they were/are as a Native student and conform/succumb to American peer-pressure to succeed; or, reject the societal pressure and "go back to the blanket" (be Native) and eventually drop-out.

Need

The aforementioned describe the condition that exists for tribes throughout the country. Tribes have a critical need for effective leadership which may be found in the brightest of their youth. However, these bright American Indian and Alaska Native youth have many pressures on them to gravitate to the middle or mask their gifts and talents to enable them to "fit in." Although efforts have been made legislatively and in school policies where Native students attend, cultural diversity is a fleeting concept. Public school efforts to educate American Indian students still focus more on remedial education. The myth in American education has been that the bright student will prevail and "make it on his own" has not been dispelled. They are at risk due to stereotypical perceptions of educators and the public in general. Gifted American Indian and Alaska Native students are not appropriately assessed and thus do not qualify for gifted programs. Facts exist that indicate that economically/socially disadvantaged and culturally diverse students (which includes American Indian and Alaska native students) are not participating in gifted programs in similar numbers as their non-Native peers. Why is this? Why aren't there more American Indians and Alaska native students in gifted programs?

The Meriam Report and the Kennedy Report outlined such things as isolation (physical and social), cultural irrelevancy, lack of parental involvement in education, and lack of Native teachers as role models, as factors that needed to be addressed to improve the processes of educating Natives. These conditions contribute directly to the "problem" of ensuring that the bright American Indian and Alaska Native students can have their needs addressed in the schools they attend. Living in isolation (social and physical) can cause a student to not have the life experiences that are drawn upon in responding to questions in most standardized assessment measures currently in use. Likewise being from a different culture may cause differing perspectives by educators who, in the gifted, assess American Indian and Alaska Native students for gifted programs. Most identified gifted students live with both parents who provide support and serve as role models; but for the American Indian and Alaska Native students, many come from dysfunctional family situations. The lack of Native teachers and other Native role models contributes to the American Indian and Alaska Native students' limited understanding of "what could be." *These factors combined contribute to designating those bright, motivated and highly able gifted and talented American Indian and Alaska Native students as students "at risk."* They have to confront stereotypic perceptions by an education system which that perceives them to be "inferior" and in need of remedial education. Little consideration is given to the fact that the American Indian and Alaska Native students may not fare well in the assessment processes for reasons unrelated to their schooling. Even if the bright American Indian and Alaska Native student can overcome the assessment barriers, the problems of being a minority in the American society must still be resolved. Add to this problem, those problems relating to current tribal and cultural perspectives of what is appropriate behavior concerning competition, personal recognition, conformity and "for the good of the whole (tribe)". To overcome these obstacles the gifted American Indian and Alaska Native student has a formidable task. The outlook is not good for the gifted American Indian and Alaska Native student to succeed with at least three levels of extremely complex social, psychological and personal hazards to negotiate. The Gifted and Talented American Indian and Alaska Native student are truly "at risk." However, should he/she breach these barriers then they must negotiate *the* major barrier, the American education system.

Assessment

Before one can fully discuss assessing gifts and talents and how these behaviors manifest themselves in American Indian and Alaska Native students, one must initially come to some understanding of the concepts of giftedness. High

ability students have long been a part of the American Education system. These high ability students exhibited behaviors that set them apart from the larger masses of "average" students. For the education community, particularly those involved with researching, these high ability students were sought out and groomed for intellectual pursuits. Those students came from families who had the resources to provide a variety of learning experiences. Those "chosen" few were provided private schooling, travel, mentors and an environment in which the expectation was for them to assume responsible position of authority. This "elitist" approach to identifying and grooming of "selected" individuals for higher level schooling and eventual authority did not recognize those with little resources (poor), or from different cultures (minority).

Formal studies of giftedness, translated early on as intelligence (IQ), were provided by Lewis Terman who adapted Alfred Binet's intelligence scales in early 1911 and essentially developed an American version. This American version of Binet's measure of school children's intelligence proved to be cumbersome, time consuming and required a trained clinical psychiatrist to administer (Resnick & Goodman, 1990). Authur Otis created and normed a group testing version of the Stanford-Binet intelligence test which was used as the basis for the Alpha test administered World War I draftees in 1917. This mass testing made its school use more feasible from the 1920s on.

Unintended consequences of the development of the intelligence test have led the American education systems to become dependent upon them and the use of the I.Q. test infers that intelligence coincides with logical-mathematical and linguistic skills. Terman studied selected students over a period of time and came to believe that the gifted (intellectually bright) enjoyed their abilities as a result of natural endowment and not opportunities presented by schooling; however, by the 1930s racial and ethnic biases were being recognized in the tests and those purporting certain racial positions recounted their views.

One basic premise that has not generally been accepted among the American education community is that "...giftedness may be present in all cultural groups across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor..." (1990 Draft definition, National Steering Committee on report of Gifted Education, 20 Years After The Marland Report).

Researchers have probed ways to assess and identify gifted students and in a review of the literature McShane (1989) reveals that

> ... the research or lack of longitudinal and other types of studies probably have resulted from the inability of psychologists and educators to agree on a definition and methods for measuring giftedness.

This lack of agreement by experts on the nature of giftedness has caused chaos in trying to assess giftedness in students.

Recent studies offer gifted constructs that, although research based, persist in confounding the assessment process. Steinberg and Davidson (1986), reassess what is meant by giftedness in their edited volume, *Conceptions of Giftedness*, distinguishing between explicit and implicit theories, subdividing explicit theoretical approaches into cognitive theory, development theory and domain specific theory. Davidson describes giftedness as ... a construct which is invented and not discovered and reflects what that society wants it to be." Tannenbaum classifies talents into four types: **scarcity**, those in short supply that makes life easier, safer, healthier; **surplus**, allowing people to reach new heights in sensitivity in the arts; **quota**, specialized high level skills; and **anomalous**, prodigious feats of mind and body. Renzulli (1986) proposed giftedness in a three ring construct which focused on the interaction of above average ability, creativity and task commitment. Burkowski and Peck (1986) focused on the contribution of one metamemory while Davidson (1986), identified three kinds of insight of giftedness, **selective encoding** (distinguishing the right way to use relevant-irrelevant information); **selective consideration** (putting the pieces together in the right way) and **selective comparison** (relating the pieces of information already stored in the memory). Steinburg (1986) offered these aspects of intellectual giftedness: superiority of mental processes, superiority in dealing with relative novelty, and superiority in applying the processes of intellectual functioning. Feldman (1986) offers that giftedness is domain specific... by observing movement through the mastery levels one moves through levels, rate of movement, the number of levels and the domain one selects. Gardner (1983) offers the theory of "Multiple Intelligences" which challenges the notion of a single intelligence. His seven intelligences include: musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intra-personal.

As has been presented the assessment of giftedness depends on the frame of reference of what one assesses. There are other researchers that say the family (Gilbert & Renco, 1986) and others (Bloom, 1985) plus the environment (home, values, encouragement) play a great role in the development

of a students gifts and talents. As I.Q. tests were developed to assess gifted students ability the idea became prevalent that a students' intelligence quotient was the indicator of ability. But as Gardner postulates, intellectual ability may be only one area of giftedness.

The assumption that one test could indicate a students ability has been discounted. Tonemah and Brittan (1985) in the development of the American Indian Gifted and Talented Assessment Model (AIGTAM), postulate that standardized achievement and intelligence tests developed by commercial test makers were intended to serve large urban school districts and reflect those life experiences. As a result American Indian and Alaska Native students who do not have these life experiences may be discriminated against when these standardized instruments are used to assess their gifts and talents. This condition led them to caution educators of American Indian and Alaska Native students to proceed with caution when using these tests to assess American Indian and Alaska Native students and consider the following limitation of standardized tests:

1. Standardized test scores by themselves cannot measure total achievement of a school, of a grade, or of a discipline in a grade.
2. Standardized tests cannot be used as a sole source of evaluation of student performance, particularly, gifted and talented students.
3. Using standardized tests, for special populations, particularly Natives, may be discriminatory.

Since commercial testing companies design, produce and norm their tests to reflect life experiences of the cultural majority, students outside these experiences may have difficulty in responding to questions related to life experiences which seem foreign to them. For example, students from rural areas or reservations may be stymied when a test item related to urban bus schedules is a part of a standardized test.

However, one must consider that standardized test scores must not be disavowed entirely. These assessment measures must be used with caution and the scores derived can serve as indicators when considered with other criteria to assess Native student abilities. Therefore the following conditions, ideally, may be appropriate in the testing situation for American Indian and Alaska Native students:

1. Standardized achievement and intelligence tests should not be the sole criterion in selecting Native students for gifted and talented programs.
2. Individual intelligence tests should augment group intelligence tests when assessing Native students gifts and talents.
3. A professionally trained psychometrist (preferably Native) should administrate and evaluate Native students.
4. Appropriate cut-off points and/or lower weighing of achievement and IQ scores should be considered in the screening, identification and selection processes to Native students to gifted and talented programming.
5. Group achievement and intelligence tests should be developed and normed with a Native student population.

The extensive use of standardized tests (achievement and IQ) has led to the underrepresentation of economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse students. The literature reveals that these measures are not infallible. Binet (1973) the originator of the intelligence scales and Terman (1916) who revised and popularized their use in the United States of America, warned that they should be used as only one piece of data along with other important information about the student in any process of educational decision-making.

Karnes and Collins concur and state:

> ...there are several areas relevant to gifted and talented assessment in which instruments are either unavailable or available in limited numbers. These areas include screening and identification of the culturally diverse, the handicapped, potential leaders and performing and other creative artists. (1981, p.__)

Problems related to using standardized measures are that they are: (1) normed on white middle class values, life experiences and socioeconomic values, (2) rely heavily on command of the English language, (3) require experiential knowledge, (Alexander and Muia, 1982).

Because of bias in standardized measures toward the white middle class, American Indians and Alaska Native students who are gifted and talented or have the potential for being gifted and talented have been "slipping through the cracks" in the assessment process. Gallagos (1973) and Stallings (1972) observed that "...among the culturally different and poor, we can expect to find our largest "unmined source of talent." This may certainly be true of Natives. Many Native students are "labeled" in the educational process and teachers, administrators and the students them-

selves react and/or accept these labels. For example, "underachievers" is a label placed on students. The question whether or not the student is an underachiever may be in direct proportion to interest in the curricular offerings, the stimulation (interest) of the teacher or a myriad of other conditions. Alexander and Muia point out that "...it is important to know more about an individual student beyond specific test scores and grade point average." (1981) The "...culturally different underachievers may find their abilities overlooked and unappreciated and prefer to dumb-out or drop-out rather than muddle through."

A basic assumption of educators in the development of gifted education was that it related only to the general intellectual domain. Standardized achievement and intelligence tests were then developed to identify those intellectually bright students. The flaw in the "basic assumption" is that if the assessment measures identify intellectually bright students then why are economically disadvantaged and culturally different students underrepresented in gifted programs? Frasier writes that "... (the) reliance on teacher nominations and the use of I.Q. cut off scores has effectively precluded the identification of the gifts and talents of these students." (1990) Bernal also notes that:

> many gifted minority and white students, if lacking in psychometric sophistication or command of standard English, will score below their achievement or aptitude levels. Such students cannot be identified by traditional means, especially early in their school careers. (1982, p. 52)

Passow (1982) succinctly described three factors affecting the identification of gifted disadvantaged children: (a) experiential deprivations, especially in early childhood (b) limited language development; and (c) socioeconomic or racial isolation.

So what does this portend for the American Indian and Alaska Native student who may exhibit high performance behaviors but may not do well on standardized tests? There is evidence that Native students are/can be identified utilizing these measures (AIGTAM, 1985), however the AIGTAM data also indicates that: (1) Native students are not represented in proportion to the non-Native student representation (2) the less Native (degree of blood) a student is, the more likely he/she is to be identified as gifted. This does not imply that there are fewer gifted American Indian and Alaska Native students with higher degree of Indian blood but the data suggests that they are less likely to be identified or selected for gifted programs. Historically, student placement in gifted and talented programs have been based on criteria or assessment such as standardized I.Q. scores and achievement test scores. Most states have additional criteria for gifted and talented assessment but prefer to use only standardized test scores as their criteria for farther assessment and placement. Most standardized tests are culturally biased and do not take into consideration the ethnic background (tribal) of students. If a Native student does not meet the state's or school's requirements usually test scores, set forth for placement, they are denied entrance. Many Native students have been overlooked because of this practice and in some cases are not even nominated for screening in a gifted program. Minority students, including Natives, the handicapped, and economically disadvantaged are usually the ones that have been overlooked.

Only in recent years has the gifted education community began to address the under-representation issue. The elitist philosophy of gifted education has grudgingly given way to an egalitarian perspective. However there are elitist bastions still in existence in the gifted education community; however, the mood of the national gifted community is moving to more of an "inclusive" philosophy versus an exclusive philosophy of which the dependence on standardized tests has helped to perpetuate.

Accurate and appropriate assessment of ability from a multiple of sources may be the answer to underrepresentation of American Indian and Alaska Native Students. For tribal entities throughout the United States this multi-criteria assessment focus may have enduring implications. Consider this scenario: a public school has 50 percent of its student body from a tribe living nearby on the reservation. The public school utilizes a variety of ways to identify students for its gifted programs taking nominations from school personnel, ancillary school personnel, students, peers, family members and friends of students. Gifted Assessment is provided in a number of areas: general academics, leadership, critical thinking, the arts, creativity and psychomotor skills. The possibility of tribal students being identified from the gifted program is enhanced through this multicriteria approach. Conversely, the likelihood of more non-Native students identified for the gifted program is also enhanced. However, should a multicriteria assessment be conducted which utilizes appropriate assessment measures there is a likelihood that more tribal students may also be included.

The implications for the tribe in this scenario would/could possibly be the identification of selected tribal youth to have the opportunity to

excel in gifted programs where in the past they had been passed over. The gifted literature suggests that a multicriteria approach to assessment may include:

a. soliciting nominations from persons other than the teacher (Blackshear, 1979; Davis, 1978);

b. using checklists and rating scales specifically designed for culturally diverse and disadvantaged populations (Bernal, 1974; Gay, 1978; Hilliard, 1976; Torrance, 1977 & Tonemah, 1985);

c. modifying or altering traditional identification procedures (Fitz-Gibbon, 1975);

d. developing culture specific identification systems (Mercer and Lewis, 1978);

e. using quota systems (La Rose, 1978);

f. developing programs designed to eliminate experiential and language deficits prior to evaluation for gifted programs (Johnson, Starnes, Gregory and Blaylock, 1985);

g. using a matrix to weight data from multiple sources (Baldwin & Wooster, 1977; Baldwin, 1984); and

h. modifying assessment procedures by providing students with instruction before administering test tasks (Feuerstein, 1979).

Maker and Schiever note that a multicriteria assessment should (a) use multiple assessment procedures, including objective data from a variety of sources (p. 295); and (b) using a case study approach, in which a variety of assessment data is interpreted in the context of a student's individual characteristics, and decisions are made by a team of qualified individuals (p. 296). Utilizing a multicriteria assessment approach which incorporates all but (h) of the preceding list and placing the data on a matrix for compilation of student data has worked well for the American Indian Research and Development, Inc., which operates summer and week-end programs for American Indian and Alaska Native students. AIRD, Inc. utilizes the Indian Student Biographical Data Questionnaire (ISBDQ) to screen and select students to its programs. The ISBDQ has eight criteria for assessment; (1) test scores (2) GPA (3) leadership checklist (4) creativity checklist (5) evidence of visual and performing arts (6) community referral (7) evidence of tasks commitment (8) evidence of motivation. The information provided, via the ISBDQ, provides necessary information on which to make decisions on selection.

One can then conclude that a multicriteria approach to assessment may be the solution to address the under-representation of American Indian and Alaska Native students to gifted programs.

Tribal-Cultural Assessment

Specific to American Indians and Alaska Natives, a gifted education is the concern for relevancy in the schooling offered by the institutions that are charged to educate them. The Meriam Report and Kennedy Report recommended that schools educating American Indian and Alaska Native students should pay particular attention to the cultures of tribal students. An example of a school such as described was an "experimental" school in Rough Rock, Arizona established in the 1960s as an Indian controlled school whose base was of the Navajo culture and Navajo community based. The aim of the Rough Rock demonstration school was to have the school reflect the culture of the community and hopefully this would lead to more Native parental participation in the education of their children plus the school could assist in developing the community. Experts at the time deemed the school a success on all counts. Dr. Robert Roessel, Rough Rock's first Director, stated "the schools should help transmit to the young, the cultures of their parents' and tribal Elders should be used by the schools, for instance, to teach traditional materials." (*Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge*, 1968, p. 177) This tribal cultural emphasis, as stated, could possibly bring needed relevancy to the education of tribal youth.

Pertinent in the approach of including Native tribal cultural community-based curricula is ensuring this involvement in defining and identifying gifted Native students. It has been suggested that criteria for identification be based on the historical and cultural realities of the local community (Locke 1979), that community members themselves participate in the setting of these criteria (George 1979, Dodson and Mitchell 1978), and that specific tribal values, considered as behaviors, form the basis for gifted identification criteria (Peacock, 1979). Torrance (1977) supports this position in a comparative statement:

> Based on rather extensive experiences with disadvantaged black students, the author makes a case for searching for those kinds of giftedness that are encouraged by the specific culture and socioeconomic group of the student. (p. __)

He further states:

> ...the greatest strengths of disadvantaged and culturally diverse students are their creative skills and motivations, that these should be given priority consideration in developing curricula and career plans for disadvantaged and culturally different gifted students. (p.__)

Inclusion of these concepts in assessing these students ability by necessity have to be non-traditional in nature. Standardized test scores will not evidence these talents. The non-traditional assessment may include observations, essays and checklists.

At present, there is little availability or relevancy of gifted and talented differentiated curriculum developed specifically for Native students. Because of cultural values and unique tribal characteristics, the interests of Native students will be different from non-Natives which requires a different content than that of the regular classroom. Curricular content unique to a certain tribe could contain the language, history, ceremonies and other important qualities of that tribe. Curriculum that address tribal qualities could validate the tribes culture, which some researchers feel may be one of the majors reasons for low academic achievement among Native students. Therefore, an adapted differentiated curriculum directed specifically to American Indian and Alaska Native students needs to be developed to assist in reversing the trends of low educational levels of Native people.

The case can then be made, likewise, to consider the inclusion of tribal-cultural criteria in the assessment and screening process to identify American Indian and Alaska Native students for gifted programs. The critical question is *how* does one assess a tribal students understanding and ability of his/her tribe when there are close to 300 tribes in the United States? Although this problem appears at first glance to be insurmountable, it can be done.

AIRD, Inc., in the development of the AIGTAM (1985) surveyed 266 Native educators across the country to determine their tribes perspectives of giftedness. Two content analysis were conducted on the data and a meta-content analysis was conducted which identified categories, and subcategories of tribal-cultural perspectives of giftedness.

Four categories evolved that emphasize a range of skills and qualities that when combined provide a reasonable description of tribal and cultural perspective of giftedness and talentedness for Native youth. The categories have sub-categories that are capsulated to words or phrases that are indicative of the responses of participants described previously. The categories and sub-categories that evolved are as follows:

1. Acquired Skills*
   a. Problem Solving Skills
   b. Written and Oral English Language and Communication Skills
   c. Task Commitment
   d. Productivity
   e. Scientific Ability
2. Tribal and Cultural Understanding
   a. Knowledge of Ceremonies
   b. Knowledge of Tribal Traditions
   c. Knowledge of Tribe History
   d. Respectful of Tribal Elders
   e. Tribal Language Competence
   f. Storytelling Ability
3. Human and Personal Qualities*
   a. High Intelligence
   b. Visionary and Inquisitive and Intuitive
   c. Creative
   d. Individualistic Self-Disciplined
   e. Leadership
   f. Athletic Prowess, Coordination and Dexterity
   g. Self-Discipline
   h. Sense of Humor
   i. Intelligent
4. Aesthetic Abilities*
   a. Demonstrated Visual Art Talent
   b. Demonstrated Performing Art Talent
   c. Creative Expression
   d. Native Art(s) Talent

*Sub categories often cross other categories which reveals that the categories are *not* mutually exclusive.

Although AIRD, Inc. does not assert this tribal-cultural checklist, is appropriate for all tribes, AIRD does offer that this checklist may serve to stimulate gifted educators of Indian students to amend and/or adapt such a checklist to assess the gifted perspective of tribes in which they serve.

Including a tribal-culture criteria in gifted multi-criteria American Indian and Alaska Native student assessment is an appropriate and much needed step in the right direction in gifted and talented programming for them.

Gifted and Talented Programs and Services

As this paper suggests, gifted and talented education for American Indian and Alaska Native students is a recent phenomena in American education. A recent study, *No Gifts Wasted* (1989),

indicates that economically disadvantaged minority children constitute 30 percent of pubic school enrollment but compose less than 20 percent of the students selected to gifted programs. Florey and Tafoya (1988) found that Native students comprise .8 percent of the public school population but, less than .3 percent participate in gifted programs. Another recent study, "National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988: Base Year School Administrator Survey" reveals that 1,995 (13.4 percent) of the schools surveyed provided opportunities for racial and ethnic groups in the eighth grade in public schools in the U.S.A.

These facts indicate that although American Indian and Alaska Natives represent .8 percent of public school student population there is a question of proportionate representation. It is unknown in the gifted education community of the number of programs in the U.S.A. that offer learning experiences specifically to meet the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

The Office of Indian Education in the early 1980s listed four projects funded under its auspices that were specific to American Indians and Alaska Natives, they are as follows:

- Raven Circle Project, United Tribes Educational/Technical Center, Bismarck, North Dakota. A Indian Community based definition and Identification project, developing and conducting a needs assessment and computerizing data.
- Puyallup Tribally Operated BIA Contract School, Puyallup, Washington. Served 20 students Kindergarten through sixth grade with a half time teaching aide. Using Individualized Education Plan. Students identified by parents and school district. Cultural sensitive instruction in Math, Science and leadership.
- Native American Gifted Project, North Kitsap School District, Washington. A curriculum development project in art, writing, video communications and storytelling based on local tribal customs. High motivation when students and community are directly involved.
- Northwind Warriors, Minneapolis Public School, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Served grades three through 12 a total of 17 students participated in advanced cause work in accelerated class with a leadership component.

Several projects funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1980s that had a gifted and talented orientation were:

- Shannon County Schools, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. Implemented a gifted and talented project to build skills in art, music, communication and science. Tribal Cultural orientation in learning experience which was a positive reinforcement to build self-esteem. The community impacted positively as a result of project.
- Navajo Academy, Farmington, New Mexico. Established as a gifted and talented academy. Served primarily Navajo students with a base of cultural orientation throughout the curricula. Serves grades nine through 12.
- Chemawa Indian School, Salem, Oregon. A pull out enrichment program serving students in grades nine through 12. Had a leadership component.
- Southern Pueblo Agency, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Several elementary schools providing enrichment learning activities.
- The Santa Fe Indian School, Santa Fe, New Mexico had a pull-out enrichment program serving students in grades nine through 12. Following its OIE grant project period the pull-out enrichment program was integrated into the regular curriculum and students served on an in-class accelerated basis.
- Jemez Day School, Jemez, New Mexico utilized drama kinetics throughout its k-6 curricula which emphasized oral and body movement in its instruction. Jemez students were instructed and utilized high level communications skills throughout the school which culminated in a Christmas theatre production which featured all students in addition to community persons in adult roles.

Indian Education Act programs in Lawrence, Kansas and at the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma had Gifted components by which students learned varying aspects of leadership. All these programs functioned for several years and disappeared due to loss of funding and absorption into the regular school (district) functions. All these projects reported positive impact on students and community.

The Office of Indian Education, through its discretionary grant program in the late 1980s, funded gifted programs at Fort Belknap, Montana, a cooperative effort between the tribe and school, and through the American Indian Research and Development, Inc. (AIRD, Inc.) a private non-profit Indian-owned corporation located in Oklahoma.

AIRD, Inc. has developed and implemented the following projects under the Indian Education Act, discretionary grant auspices:

1. American Indian Gifted and Talented Assessment Model (AIGTAM): a series of procedural steps to utilize multi-criteria approach to assessing American Indian and Alaska Native gifts and talents. Primary data instrument is the Indian Student Biographical Data Questionnaire (ISBDQ), it includes leadership, creativity and Tribal-cultural understanding checklists.
2. Explorations In Creativity (EIC): a summer enrichment program which is holistic in approach. EIC offers enrichment learning activities in nine content areas, with a tribal cultural orientation. EIC has a "No Junk" food policy with recreation and fitness on a daily basis. Students are provided leadership opportunities, creative problem solving experiences in an environment which promotes positive images of Natives and excellence.
3. Weekends for Indian Scholars Enrichment (WISE): an academic year model to provide gifted Native students with 16 hours of instructor contact per weekend in three content areas. All content areas have tribal-cultural orientation. WISE is held on college campuses to provide incentives to consider higher education. Tribal heritage is positively supported as well as higher level achievement.
4. In-Service Mentorships: Accessing Gifted Education (IMAGE): A project that developed in-service training materials on gifted and talented education for parent, tribes, and Native organizations. IMAGE developed a mentorship model to identify, screen, select and match mentors with mentees for use by Tribes, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and State Education Agencies (SEAs).
5. Centering Optimum Youth Opportunities Toward Excellence (COYOTE): A Gifted and Talented curriculum development project specific to Native education. Project Excellent Curriculum for Exceptional Learners (EXCEL) is a further development of the gifted and talented curriculum project.
6. Elementary American Indian Gifted and Talented Assessment Model (EAIGTAM): A multi-criteria assessment measure to assess elementary gifted Native students. (Currently in the validation process).
7. Summer Educational Enrichment (SEE): An elementary summer day program to be conducted at two sites in Oklahoma. Targeting grades four through six, will utilize EAIGTAM to screen and select students into the program.
8. TRacking American Indian Leading Scholars (TRAILS): A planning project to conduct a follow-up study of Native students who have participated in AIRD's summer and weekend project and to discern the impact of the programs on them. A tracking model will be developed.
9. American Indian Teacher Training Program (AITTP): A Master of Education (M.Ed.) in gifted education teacher training program. A three year project to recruit, screen and select ten Native teachers or teachers of Native students to study for one year, 36 credit hour course of study.

These AIRD, Inc. projects have been systematically developed to build on the preceding projects and products. The eventual goal is to develop an American Indian gifted and talented academy.

In the 1989-90 school year the Bureau of Indian Affairs funded approximately 60 schools to provide programming for gifted American Indian and Alaska Native students. Data is not available on the nature of the gifted programs, but Education Program Specialists within the Central BIA Education Office indicated the range of programs include in-class enrichment, pullout, acceleration weekend programs and independent study as well as mentorships.

Gifted and Talented Program Evaluation

Gifted programs specific for American Indian and Alaska Native students in comparison to programs for non-Native students are few in number. It is the scarcity of these type programs that makes existing Native gifted program effectiveness a critical issue. Theoretically, the schools reflect the community in which they serve. Concomitantly, the Native gifted programs should reflect the Native community from which the Native students emanate. To do this, the Native community, ideally, needs to be directly involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the gifted program as well as developing the philosophy for the gifted programs which should set the basic direction for the program. If these

things occur, then, determining the effectiveness of the gifted and talented program would be a relatively simple task. However, the ideal scenario of full Native community participation is highly unlikely. The reasons are myriad as to why the Native community doesn't readily participate in the education of their children and have been covered in other sections of this paper.

To begin determining the effectiveness of the gifted and talented programs one must not confuse this with determining the impact of the program on participating students. Although both are important it is of greater importance to determine if student abilities or behaviors have been enhanced by their participation in the gifted and talented program. Evaluation of program effectiveness can be conducted in many ways. Basic to program evaluation is to determine if the program essentially is "... doing what it said it would do." Are program participants of the intended service pool being provided learning experiences that accelerate or enrich their gifts and talents? Are the learning activities appropriate to meet each students' needs and conform to the stated philosophy of the gifted program within the school district? Are projected time-lines and budgetary milestones being adhered to? Are the evaluation processes and procedures being followed. These and related program effectiveness features can be delineated by using Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model that has proven an effective evaluation model for evaluating Native education programs. The CIPP model is comprehensive and provides for a systematic monitoring of program activities throughout its operation (process) and ends with a cumulative evaluation (product). The "C" of the CIPP model is the Contextual portion, using those written data resources generated to produce the program: the proposal, evaluation reports, and other supporting documents. The I in CIPP is the Input portion, which calls for input through interviews or questionnaires of those involved in the project: students, teachers, administrators and parents. The CIPP evaluation once applied can be the source of data on which to make program decisions. Too often in gifted education because of limited resources, programs are developed and student are "fitted" to programs. This situation leads to inappropriately matching of program services to students needs. To maximize gifted programming to students those educational services provides need to assure that their gifted programs are adhere to stated philosophical goals of the program and its services do indeed meet students needs. Determining the impact of the gifted program's impact on students is extremely important for parents, tribes and school. If a cadre of young high performance individuals are to emerge from a gifted program, then those responsible for the program need to ascertain its impact on students. Gifted program effectiveness can most effectively be measured by its impact on participating students. There are standardized measures that can give indications of student academic progress and teacher made assessment measures will also yield data on which to base judgements on progress. However, most school district gifted education program goals extend beyond academic achievement. Concepts like leadership, higher levels of thinking and performance, critical thinking and problem solving are often included in a gifted programs philosophical goals. Should the gifted program prove to be effective in providing these learning experience, then the measure of impact on students can take a variety of directions. Qualitative evaluation techniques can be utilized to ascertain in general terms how participating students are absorbing intended learning objectives. Observation of student activities with documentation or interviews and other feedback such as opinionaires and checklists can serve to gather data on students. Products related to the learning objectives can be judged and included with other information to assess student progress. However, those who assess student progress in gifted programs must be aware that gifted students have many high performance behaviors so that it may be difficult to determining if their innate abilities or activities outside the gifted program have enhanced a student's performance in addition to the gifted learning experiences or they attribute their performance directly to the gifted program. Regardless, determining program effectiveness and its impact on participating students is critical to the process of educating gifted students. Collected and analyzed data can serve well to correct program deficiencies and more effectively meet student needs.

Barriers to American Indian and Alaska Native Gifted Education

Stereotypic Perceptions

As a result of the intent of the Native education system having a remedial education emphasis since its inception, for all American Indian and Alaska Native students there has been a reluctance and resistance to the consideration of the inclusion of American Indian and Alaska Natives to gifted programs. Prevailing perceptions are because "...There just aren't any who qualify ..."

(*Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge*, 1968). If an American Indian and Alaska Native student is considered for a gifted program, the stereotypic perception is that they're good in art, athletics and singing and dancing. There is little credence given by those who teach American Indian and Alaska Natives that these students could be academically gifted, or perform at high levels of leadership, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving or inter-personal and intra-personal relationships. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the capabilities to perform at high levels on all levels of human endeavor. The mitigating factors that prevent this from happening are the lack of opportunity, the lack of appropriate assessment and the lack of understanding of what their cultures considers high performance or outstanding behaviors in their cultural contexts. The assumption that high performance is based on the public schools perception of education is appropriate if it reflects the local communities values. However to require all ethnic and minority groups within that community to adhere to these criteria is highly chauvinistic. Meeting a communities academic criteria for giftedness is appropriate, but have criteria for example in leadership, may be inappropriate for minorities or culturally different communities within a community. Stereotypic perceptions of these groups abound and are overtly or covertly reinforced in school practices. Contributing to the stereotypic perception of American Indian and Alaska Native students is their inclusion in education literature with other "minorities," "culturally different," "disadvantaged," or "culturally diverse" populations. These terms are well intended but fall short of describing the uniqueness of American Indian and Alaska Natives as members of individual tribes and villages and implies that American Indian and Alaska Natives are a homogeneous group. Further, stereotypic perception encompasses the perception that all Natives relate to the land and have ethereal connections with the sun, moon, stars, and sky. In today's climate with the majority of American Indian and Alaska Native students attending public schools there is a likelihood that adherence to "traditional" tribal teaching, may have been diluted with the acculturation. Regardless of the degree of acculturation as assimilation of tribal members to the larger American society exists, these perceptions will exist.

Inappropriate Assessment

Although giftedness is found in all racial, cultural, social and economic segments of American society, there are "...factors that tend to veil the talent potential of gifted groups, hindering true readings and proper identification" (Khatena, 1982, p. 238).

The dependence of America's public schools on standardized tests has led to the under representation of American Indian and Alaska Native students in gifted programs. Although most states allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) the flexibility to include a multi-criteria approach for assessment of students for gifted and talented programs, few LEAs do this. Most school districts rely primarily on a certain percentile score on achievement tests or an I.Q. score to identify gifted students. For the reasons described in an earlier section standardized tests may discriminate against American Indian and Alaska Native students regarding assessment for gifted programs. The "quick and easy " method of student assessment (reliance on standardized tests scores) is being challenged by those who are in the underrepresented gifted population and by those who would reform educational policy. These educational policy makers are being influenced to seriously consider a multi-criteria approach to student assessment for giftedness and are being urged to gather multi data on which make a determinations of a students' ability. The multi data collection can then be compiled into a "case study" where for example, Gardner's Multi-Intelligences can be considered in the assessment process. These conceptional changes in direction in gifted education could well lead to American Indian and Alaska Native students being identified and included in higher numbers in gifted programs across the nation.

American Indian and Alaska Native Teachers of Gifted

As described earlier the Meriam and Kennedy Reports recommended that there should be more American Indian and Alaska Native teachers teaching this student population. The reasons for this recommendation from the reports is apparent: American Indian and Alaska Native teachers should be more sensitive and aware of the tribal cultures of the students they teach. This can if accurate, theoretically, lead to positive relationships, which could lead to appropriate learning activities to meet student needs, which could lead to student success, which could lead to enhanced student self-concepts, which could result in overall higher achievement. This scenario could work for any group of students, Native or non-Native, if the teachers could interact positively and with sensitivity with students to motivate, stimulate and

challenge them to higher levels of performance. American Indian and Alaska Native teachers by virtue of their chosen profession, teaching, provide needed role models and advocates in the school setting. American Indian and Alaska Native teaching role models not only perform the teaching task but can also provide the link for American Indian and Alaska Native students between education and work and careers. Additionally, the opportunity is there (in the school setting) to dispel Native stereotypes; advocate for American Indian and Alaska Native students; and, sensitize and educate their peers about the American Indian and Alaska Native cultures, needs and visions.

Regarding gifted education, not every teacher is suited to teach the gifted. American Indian and Alaska Native teachers of the gifted should have a temperament that reflects a high degree of self-esteem, an intimate knowledge of who they are as tribal and Native people, have a passion for what they teach, are confident of their teaching abilities, have a commitment to teaching American Indian and Alaska Native students, and are creative and skilled in their teaching area. As far as American Indian and Alaska Native gifted education is concerned, American Indian and Alaska Native teachers formally prepared in gifted education (1) will bring knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, social and emotional needs American Indian and Alaska Native students (2) can develop appropriate learning experiences for American Indian and Alaska Native students (3) can relate well and create a positive learning environment in which American Indian and Alaska Native students may feel free to take risks, integrate tribe and culture in their learning and build on the positives of American Indian and Alaska Native students as individuals and as tribal members.

Tribes and American Indian and Alaska Native Parent Involvement in Gifted Education

Education for many Native people is believed to be the key to survival for tribal entities. However, to ensure this survival will occur may be to consider identifying and providing higher level learning experiences of the bright youth of tribes. If tribes rely on the current system of education to meet their needs, a longer period of inappropriate education may occur. Effective leadership, critical thinking, creative problem solving and commitment to task are behaviors that tribes need to identify and develop among their youth. Once these behaviors are identified in these youth and they are provided the support and encouragement to excel, these American Indian and Alaska Native youth may be influenced, upon completion of their education to return to work with their tribes. Although current tribal leaders have many of the abilities listed here, the formal development through gifted education programs of a cadre of leaders, thinkers and futurists can enable a tribe to truly become self-determinate and provide for its members.

Parents of American Indian and Alaska Native students who are gifted have a difficult task. The rearing of gifted children may be more problematic than educating them. Giftedness manifests itself in many ways educationally and in many ways personally. Parents of gifted children must find ways to cope with a myriad of questions, unusual solutions to problems, unique and intense interests and what may appear to be "weird" behaviors. They, like many educators may have to cope with children who are smarter than they and must find ways to meet their socio-emotional and personal needs. If there are siblings in the family their needs must also be met on an equal basis. However, regardless of problems encountered, parents of gifted children universally want the best for their children. Parents of the gifted need to become acquainted with the literature on gifted children, learn how to meet their needs and how they as parents can adapt/adopt a lifestyle that will enable their gifted child's development and not disrupt the balance of their total family life. Native parents of gifted more likely than not will fall in the category of economically disadvantaged. To enable their gifted child(ren) development, they need information on available resources that can stimulate and motivate their child at little or no cost. They need information on how they can be supportive without showing favor or become beleaguered. They need to know how to access resources that are available and how to create the most positive environment to enhance their gifted childs' abilities.

Parents of gifted children need to come to understand the nature of giftedness and how they, as parents, must learn to cope with their child of high ability. They must come to recognize that giftedness is a positive value and to expand and enhance their child's ability will expand and enhance their own abilities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for consideration based on the preceding discussion of gifted and talented education for American Indian and Alaska Native students. The recommendations may be directed to the overall American Education Community or to those entities directly

involved with educating American Indian and Alaska Native students.

- A massive education and public relations effort needs to be launched to dispel stereotypic images of American Indian and Alaska Native students, particularly, Gifted and Talented American Indian and Alaska Native students. The image that all American Indian and Alaska Native students need **remedial** education needs to be dispelled. The image that American Indian and Alaska Native students have the capability in all areas needs to be promoted. This effort should be directed to the American public and tribes.
- More research needs to be conducted to add specifically to the literature on gifted and talented American Indian and Alaska Native education. The uniqueness of the cultures of American Indians and Alaska Natives needs to be described and how or if these unique features contribute to their educational development. Further research could contribute to developing more appropriate approaches to educating this student population.
- Multi-criteria approaches need to be developed and utilized to assess American Indian and Alaska Native students. These multi-criteria appropriate measures should be sensitive to and/or inclusive of tribal and cultural perspectives of giftedness. Case studies should be compiled on American Indian and Alaska Native students to get a more accurate portrayal of students' strengths for identification for gifted programs.
- More programs need to be developed to prepare American Indian and Alaska Native teachers to teach in gifted programs for American Indian and Alaska Native students. They serve as role models and can bring a sensitivity of cultures and tribes to the provision of gifted education services.
- An American Indian and Alaska Native gifted Academy(s) or Magnet schools should be developed to serve American Indian and Alaska Native students which would include all traditional secondary academic areas of instruction with a tribal cultural orientation. Such institutions could provide leadership, self-concept and cultural heritage learning experiences to students in a positive environment.
- An intensive in-service training program needs to be developed to assist parents, teachers, tribal educators to understand the needs of gifted and talented American Indian and Alaska Native students.
- Funds should be provided to tribes to sponsor high ability and performing tribal youth to complete their education. These funds may be an incentive to these youth to return to work with their tribes.

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About the Author

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